

From Hogg's Instructor.

THE UNIVERSAL CRY.

BY JULIA SCARTH.

WHAT is the question of each generation?
A loud, united, and continuous cry,
Echo'd from shore to shore by age and nation—
The mighty question of humanity!

What says our deepest heart's unalter'd yearning?
What say our proudest hopes when soaring high?
What say our aspirations brightest burning?
What says the lonely bosom's saddest sigh?

What say the many who have fought and perished?
For some great truth or unacknowledged right?
What say the loves which fondest hearts have cherished?
What say those visions which ne'er saw the light?

What say those thoughts, unspeakable, unspoken?
To break the secret that remains unbroken,
And read its nature and its destiny?

What says the spirit's dumb, deep agony,
To break the secret that remains unbroken,
And read its nature and its destiny?

Oh! by these thoughts, these hopes, this speechless feeling,
This universal, vaguely-uttered cry,
Which calls upon a power itself revealing
In that one sentence 'Immortality.'

By birth, by life, by death, by separation—
From all we are—by that deep mystery
Which folds around us since our first creation—
By all that we have been or are to be—

By cruelty, injustice, and oppression—
By all the fearful wrongs of man to man,
That cry from earth to heaven, without remission,
Through time's unnoticed, unrecorded span—

By all man's virtues, crimes, his joys, his sorrows,
His wisdom, and his works, his weakness, might,
Telling of a dark eve, which a to-morrow
Can only, by its waking, bring to light—

By our dim horror of annihilation—
And by the struggles of our spirit-strife—
We call on God to be our Revelation—
To be our 'Resurrection' and our 'Life.'

From Chambers's Edinburgh Journal.

REMAINS OF NINEVEH.

[Continued.]

THE great antiquity of the objects brought to light is shown by some curious facts. Perhaps the most curious revelation of all is that which follows, betraying a comparative antiquity in a series of objects, very much in the manner of geological chronology. 'In the centre of the mound (at Nimrod),' says Mr Layard, 'I had in vain endeavored to find traces of building. Except the obelisk, two winged figures, and a few fragments of yellow limestone, which appeared to have formed part of a gigantic bull or lion, no remains of sculpture had yet been discovered. On excavating to the south, I found a well-formed tomb, built of bricks, and covered with a slab of alabaster. It was about five feet in length, and scarcely more than 18 inches in breadth in the interior. On removing the lid, parts of a skeleton were exposed to view; the skull and some of the larger bones were still entire; but on an attempt being made to remove them, they crumbled into dust. With them were three earthen vessels. A vase of reddish clay, with a long narrow neck, stood in a dish of such delicate fabric, that I had great difficulty in removing it entire. Over the mouth of the vase was placed a bowl or cup, also of red clay. This pottery appears to have stood near the right shoulder of the body. In the dust which had accumulated round the skeleton, were found beads and small ornaments belonging to a necklace. The beads are of opaque-colored glass, agate, cornelian, and amethyst. A small crouching lion of lapis-lazuli, pierced on the back, had been attached to the end of the necklace. The vases and necklaces are Egyptian in their character, being identical with similar remains found in the tombs of Egypt, and preserved in collections of antiquities from that country. With the beads was a cylinder, on which is represented the king in his chariot, hunting the wild bull, as in the bas-relief from the north-west palace. The surface of the cylinder has been so much worn and injured, that it is difficult to distinguish the figures upon it. A copper ornament resembling a modern seal, two bracelets of silver, and a pin for the hair, were also discovered. I carefully collected and preserved these interesting remains, which seemed to prove that the body had been that of a female.

On digging beyond this tomb, I found a second, similarly constructed, and of the same size. In it were two vases of highly-glazed green pottery, elegant in shape, and in perfect preservation. Near them was a copper mirror and a copper lustral spoon, all Egyptian in form.

Many other tombs were opened, containing vases, plates, mirrors, spoons, beads, and ornaments. Some of them were built of baked bricks, carefully joined, but without mortar; others were formed by large earthen sarcophagi, covered with an entire alabaster slab, similar to those discovered in the south-east corner of the mound, and already described.

Having carefully collected and packed the contents of the tombs, I removed them, and dug deeper into the mound. I was surprised to find, about five feet beneath them, the remains of

a building. Walls of unbaked bricks could still be traced; but the slabs with which they had been cased were no longer in their places, being scattered about without order, and lying mostly with their faces on the flooring of baked bricks. Upon them were both sculptures and inscriptions. Slab succeeded to slab; and when I had removed nearly twenty tombs, and cleared away the earth from a space about 50 feet square, the ruins which had been thus uncovered presented a very singular appearance. Above one hundred slabs were exposed to view, packed in rows, one against the other, as slabs in a stone-cutter's yard, or as the leaves of a gigantic book. Every slab was sculptured; and as they were placed in a regular series, according to the subjects upon them, it was evident that they had been moved, in the order in which they stood, from their original positions against the walls of sun-dried brick, and had been left as found preparatory to their removal elsewhere. That they were not thus arranged before being used in the building for which they had been originally sculptured, was evident from the fact, proved beyond a doubt by repeated observation, that the Assyrians carved their slabs after, and not before, they were placed. Subjects were continued on adjoining slabs, figures and chariots being divided in the centre. There were places for the iron brackets, or dove-tails. They had evidently been once filled, for I could still trace marks and stains left by the metal. To the south of the centre bulls were two gigantic figures, similar to those discovered to the north.

These sculptures resembled in many respects some of the bas-reliefs found in the south-west palace, in which the sculptured face of the slab, was turned, it will be remembered, towards the walls of unbaked bricks. It appeared, therefore, that the centre building had been destroyed to supply materials for the construction of this edifice. But here were tombs over the ruins. The edifice had perished; and in the earth and rubbish accumulating above its remains, a people, whose funeral vases and ornaments were identical in form and material with those found in the catacombs of Egypt, had buried their dead. What race, then, occupied the country after the destruction of the Assyrian palaces? At what period were these tombs made? What antiquity did their presence assign to the buildings beneath them? These are questions which I am yet unable to answer, and which must be left undecided until the origin and age of the contents of the tombs can be satisfactorily demanded.

It can little surprise us, after such revelations, made, as it were, out of the dust of the desert, that an Arab sheikh one day addressed Mr Layard as follows:—'Wonderful! wonderful! There is surely no god but God, and Mohammed is his prophet. In the name of the Most High, tell me, oh Bey, what you are going to do with these stones? So many thousands of purses spent upon such things! Can it be, as you say, that your people learn wisdom from them; or is it, as his reverence the cadi declares, that they are to go to the palace of your queen, who, with the rest of the unbelievers, worship these idols? As for wisdom, these figures will not teach you to make any better knives, or scissors, or chintzes; and it is in the making of these things that the English show their wisdom. But God is great! God is great! Here are stones that have been buried ever since the time of the holy Noah—peace be with him! Perhaps they were under ground before the deluge. I have lived on these lands for years. My father, and the father of my father, pitched their tents here before me; but they never heard of these figures. For twelve hundred years have the true believers (and praise be to God! all true wisdom is with them alone) been settled in this country, and none of them ever heard of a palace under ground. Neither did they who went before them. But lo! here comes a Frank from many days' journey off, and he walks up to the very place, and he takes a stick (illustrating the description at the same time with the point of his spear,) and makes a line here, and makes a line there. Here, says he, is the palace; there says he, is the gate; and he shows us what has been all our lives beneath our feet, without our having known anything about it. Wonderful! wonderful! Is it by books, is it by magic, is it by your prophets, that you have learnt these things? Speak, oh Bey—tell me the secret of wisdom.'

Mr Layard has some interesting remarks on the state of imitative art among the ancient Assyrians. 'It is impossible,' he says, 'to examine the monuments of Assyria, without being convinced that the people who raised them had acquired a skill in sculpture and painting, and a knowledge of design, and even composition, indicating an advanced state of civilization. It is very remarkable that the most ancient ruins show this knowledge in the greatest perfection attained by the Assyrians. The bas-relief representing the lion-hunt, now in the British museum, is a good illustration of the earliest school of Assyrian art yet known. It far exceeds the sculptures of Khorsabad, Kouyunkik, or the later palaces of Nimrod, in the vigour of the treatment, the elegance of the forms, and in what the French aptly term 'movement.' At the same time, it is eminently distinguished from them by the evident attempt at composition—by the artistical arrangement of the groups. The sculptors who worked at Khorsabad and Kouyunkik, had perhaps acquired more skill in handling their tools. Their work is frequently superior to that of the earlier artist in delicacy of execution—in the details of the features, for instance—and in the boldness of the relief; but the slightest acquaintance with Assyrian monuments will show that they were greatly inferior to their ancestors in the higher branches of art—in the treatment of a subject, and in beauty and variety of form. This decline

of art, after suddenly attaining its greatest perfection in its earliest stage, is a fact presented by almost every people, ancient and modern, with which we are acquainted. In Egypt, the most ancient monuments display the purest forms and the most elegant decorations. A rapid retrogression, after a certain period, is most apparent, and serves to indicate approximately the epoch of most of her remains. In the history of Greek and Roman art, this sudden rise and rapid fall are equally apparent. Even changes in royal dynasties have had influence upon art, as a glance at monuments of that part of the East of which we are specially treating will show. Thus the sculpture of Persia, as that of Assyria, was in its best state at the time of the earliest monarchs, and gradually declined until the fall of the empire. This decline in art may be accounted for by supposing that, in the infancy of a people, or after the occurrence of any great event, having a very decided influence upon their manners, their religion, or their political state, nature was the chief, if not the only object of study. When a certain proficiency had been attained, and no violent changes took place to shake the established order of things, the artist, instead of endeavoring to imitate that which he saw in nature, received as correct delineations the works of his predecessors, and made them his types and his models. In some countries, as in Egypt, religion may have contributed to this result. Whilst the imagination, as well as the hand, was fettered by prejudices, and even by laws, or whilst indolence or ignorance led to the mere servile copying of what had been done before, it may easily be conceived how rapidly a deviation from correctness of form would take place. As each copied the errors of those who preceded him, and added to them himself, it is not wonderful if, ere long, the whole became one great error. It is to be feared that this prescriptive love of imitation has exercised no less influence on modern art than it did upon the arts of the ancients. Our author then proceeds to argue that art had advanced from Assyria to Asia Minor, and thence into Greece, where it was destined to attain its highest perfection.

SELFISHNESS.

Selfishness has no soul. It is a heart of stone encased in iron. Selfishness cannot see the miseries of the world—it cannot feel the pang of thirst and hunger. It robs its own grave, sells its own bones to the doctor, and its own soul to the devil. Who will fight manfully against a selfish disposition? It grows gradually, and then mutual, increases rapidly day by day. Prosperity and good luck feed the passions—silver and gold make it laugh outright. Who has not seen the eyes of the selfish water at a good trade? Who has not seen him leap for joy at the rise of flour, while the poor were starving about? Selfishness is a passion of hell, and good men should labour to keep it there. An anecdote is told of Bartha, a French author which may serve to illustrate this passion. He called upon a dying man, to obtain his opinion on a new comedy, and insisted that he should hear him read it. 'Consider,' said the dying man, 'I have not more than an hour to live.' 'Aye,' replied the selfish man, 'but it will take but half the time.'

WASTE.

What is there that a man cannot waste? and that too, without a single instance of lavish profligacy; but solely by those minute, scarcely perceptible squanderings, which, like the constant dropping of water upon the rock, wears away that which seems most likely to endure. He may waste his health by little indulgences of pernicious habit—by constant irregularities slight in themselves, and their effects in single instances, scarcely perceptible, but which, as the laws of his being, will work gradual, but certain inroads, upon the strongest constitution, until the energies decay, the fountains of life are dried up, and premature old age sinks like a crown of thorns upon the head of early manhood. He may waste fortunes in petty squanderings—time and talent on trifles, or in idleness and listlessness. How many a giant mind has been frittered away in pursuit of the unbenefiting objects of low ambition! How often do we see powers perishing for lack of thought—shrivelling into fustigation for want of intelligence to feed upon, which use might have polished to the highest brilliancy, and exercise would have made equal to achieving the noblest purposes! How many scatter, in idleness, or in indifference to their value, the little minute particles of time, till golden hours and days, and years are wasted, the treasure of life all scattered, and death finds nothing but a poor naked and useless thing at last.

SAVE.

What! is there a man who cannot save and improve? By curbing appetite and restraining passion; by observing prudence and maintaining regularity; he may save his health, husband his strength, and thus preserve the springs of life, as constant fountains of energy and happiness to sustain and cherish him under every labor, and every hardship. He may save a fortune by industry, and denying himself needless indulgence, and he may find a pure enjoyment in devoting it to noble uses. Time—the indolent might make wealth of it. It comes to us in brief minutes to show us that present application is the sole duty required of us, yet these so waste in and make up our days and years, that misimprovement of the present is always at the expense of the future. One of the hours of each day wasted in indolence, saved and daily devoted to improvement, is enough to make an ignorant man wise in ten years—to provide the luxury of intelligence to a mind torpid from lack of thought—to brighten up

to imagine offences; and if offences were really offered, strive to return good for evil.'

Mary reddened; but she made no reply for some moments. At length she said, 'I am sure we have done as much to conciliate my aunt and Jane as they could expect—more than they ever did for us.'

'Perhaps so, my dear; but one person doing wrong is no reason why another should do so also. I have for some time past been making my observations on what has been passing around me; and with sorrow I have seen the disunion of tempers existing amongst the members of my beloved husband's family. I do not say that your coldness of feeling amounts to hatred—God forbid! I am sure if either family were ill, or in deep affliction, all this outer current of ill-will would give way, petty bickerings be forgotten, and the kindest aid and sympathy be given and received.'

'Jane my dear girl,' said Aunt Helen a few days afterwards to her elder niece, 'why do you so obstinately refuse to join the Priory party to Eldwood; yet when Helen invited you, you coldly declined? It cannot be that you have any objection to a water party, because you went to Forley with the Benfields the other day.'

'I don't care about going,' said she, bridling up. 'I don't care to go, except with one or two chosen friends like the Benfields. I don't see why I should put myself out of the way to go with people who don't want my company, and who only ask me I do think, that they may take offence at my refusing.'

'Then why refuse? If I were in your position, I would put myself very much out of the way, if necessary, to accept the invitation.'

'What! when I know they would rather be without me?'

'But, Jane it is in your power to make them rather be with you. Why, dearest, in the society of your nearest relatives, are you so constrained so cold, so silent? I can bear witness that you can be the most agreeable companion when you choose: you have stores of knowledge; you have natural wit; you have powers of pleasing and amusing which need only be exerted to make you as desired as you could wish. Go to this party; fling off constraint and hauteur; be natural; be willing to please; and, and, above all, instead of taking offence, be blind to any real or imagined affront that you may think you perceive. Do this once or twice, and believe me the effect will be magical.'

'But my dear Aunt Helen, do you not see it would be useless? Do you not see that my cousins hate me?'

'You are mistaken, Jane; they are only annoyed by your evident disdain, and naturally so: still I do not bear them harmless. There are faults on both sides; and I never knew quarrels, disputes, or coldness yet in which, on investigation, such did not appear to be the case.' But Jane would not promise to go to Eldwood, and the Priory party would not ask her again.

'Let her promise you, aunt Helen, that the invitation shall be accepted, and it shall be given,' said they.

'Let them ask me, and then they will have my answer,' said Jane. So, for want of a little concession on either side—for Jane had half resolved she would go to Eldwood if the second invitation were so worded as to please her—the opportunity was lost, and Jane said to her Aunt Helen, 'You see they did not want me; they would not ask me again for fear I should accept.'

'Nay, Jane, for fear you should refuse,' said her aunt. But Jane shook her head and was incredulous.

By this time Aunt Helen's visit had extended to double the term she had originally intended, and her medical attendant advised her to return to Lisbon, at least for the winter, as a second sojourn in England during the cold weather would be likely to prove exceedingly injurious to her health. But before she went, she made a last effort to promote harmonious understanding amongst them all. She invited them to a farewell dinner in her cottage, and they could not refuse to meet there on so peculiar an occasion. Marvellously civil were all the guests to each other during that evening; but still Aunt Helen saw, with deep regret, that her presence and the occasion of the meeting were the only causes of this cessation of covert hostilities. Even then Mrs James was secretly sneering at Mrs William's plain black dress, and Mrs William thought in her heart that, at Mrs James's time of life, a cap with a plainer trimming than pink satin and blue roses would be more becoming.

I need hardly pursue my story farther; still I am conscious that it wants that charm to most readers of such tales—a catastrophe. However I may add, in conclusion, that my object in thus tracing it has been more for instruction than amusement. These little daily feelings of unpleasantness, these chains of ill-natured feeling are frequently far harder to be overcome than a downright quarrel with a good palpable origin. In the one case there are so many small offences, so many trifling annoyances to be remembered and forgiven, so many perpetually recurring temptations to vex the easily offended, that before we can so far overcome ourselves, there must of necessity be a severe self-criticism—a veiling of pride, combined with a real wish to be at peace and live in harmony with all—a yielding and forgiving spirit on our part, before this can be accomplished. That such a line of conduct is as much our interest as our duty, must be evident to all who will consider the subject in its true light, and particularly in all such cases where the offence is one so palpably unnatural, and where the faults are so plainly on both sides.